

Edward Frank Emerich was born December 19, 1927 in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. He was born into a family including his parents and one sister. Mr. Emerich had a long line of successful war veterans in his family as well. He attended public school in the local Lebanon School District. When Mr. Emerich graduated, his father wanted him to attend college, but those were not Mr. Emerich's plans. Mr. Emerich wanted to get a job working with his hands. The U. S. Army was drafting soldiers to go to Japan, and they were switching around the date that Mr. Emerich would be drafted. Mr. Emerich and his father reached a consensus when they decided that Mr. Emerich would enlist for the minimum amount of service and attend college afterwards.

At the age of 17, Mr. Emerich was sent to training camp in Fort Dicks, New Jersey. The training experience there was difficult, but he excelled in shooting. Mr. Emerich knew how to shoot before he entered training because he and his father would often hunt and fish when Mr. Emerich was young. This experience led him to excel among the other troops in shooting.

In 1946, Mr. Emerich left home to the foreign country of Japan. Getting there was an exciting adventure for a seventeen year old. It was his first time on a boat and the weather going to Japan was unfortunate for the soldiers on the boat. Many people on the boat ride got sick, including Mr. Emerich himself. When they arrived in Japan, Mr. Emerich was stationed in the Signal Corps. The Signal Corps took care of telephones, flags, and other administrative things. Mr. Emerich also ran the warehouse and provided equipment for people who needed it. Although this branch of the army was not involved in combat, and this period was the tail-end of the war, Mr. Emerich was assigned two weapons. He was appointed with a .45 and a rifle. These guns were rarely needed, because he was not engaged in combat.

Being a "young kid" in the war, many friendships were formed between Mr. Emerich and other soldiers. Many people were drafted at this time, so there were lots of peers alongside Mr. Emerich. Off-duty, many of the soldiers went to the Cabaret in their free time. Mr. Emerich was used as a translator to communicate back and forth with the Japanese girls and the American soldiers. When he was working, Mr. Emerich was assigned five Japanese men and learned the Japanese language from them. He caught on quickly and could speak with the Japanese people fluently.

One day, Mr. Emerich was put on a special mission. He was called in by his bosses and told that he would deliver some telephone equipment to Tokyo. He was excited to go on this mission because he was aware of the atomic bomb that had been dropped on Hiroshima. His bosses told him to never, under no circumstances, to open the train car door. Mr. Emerich travelled 300 miles to Tokyo from an island called Kyushu. When the train car stopped, after hours of being in a train car all alone, his curiosity got the best of him and he opened the door. Mr. Emerich saw many Japanese people crowded around his train car. The main thing that he saw, though, was the unbelievable destruction of Hiroshima. This was said to be the highlight of Mr. Emerich's service. When he completed his year and a half in service, Mr. Emerich left the war with various medals and awards. His service was just as substantial as the physical fighting of the war.

His final thought on the Atomic bomb, even after seeing the destruction and annihilation, was that, although it killed many, it spared even more lives, on both sides of the war.

After his service, Mr. Emerich readjusted in the community well. He went off to a free college education provided by the military called a G.I. Bill. He then graduated, married, and got a new job with the government. His mother knew the personnel director in Harrisburg who provided him with a job after he graduated. He was appointed to boss, and worked in traffic surveys and topography.

Throughout his life, Mr. Emerich has felt honored to have served his country. People treat him with respect, and he has seen the courtesy and appreciation given to today's troops for giving their lives to grant the rest of us freedom. He has also met with other World War II veterans, although he knew none of them personally. The war greatly affected him in multiple ways. He learned communication skills, saw the world, and made numerous friends. The war payed for his education, and although he was not in the front line of the war, and didn't experience any battles, his work was still an extremely important part of the war.